

esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk music director & conductor

2000-2001

18th season



tao

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts

Sunday, May 13, 2001

programme

esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk music director & conductor

tao

Sunday, May 13, 2001 8:00 p.m.

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts

Guest artists

Tomoko Mukaiyama, piano, koto, voice

Beverley Johnston, percussion

Kimberley Briggs, voice

Alison Roy, voice

Christine Stelmacovich, voice

Rebecca Whelan, voice

Symphony No. 2

for orchestra, 1957

Colin McPhee

(Canada)

Intermission

TAO

for piano, koto, voice and orchestra, 1996

Louis Andriessen

(The Netherlands)

Intermission

Afro-Concerto op. 50

for solo percussion and orchestra, 1982

Maki Ishii

(Japan)

This evening's performance of Louis Andriessen's *TAO* is presented in part through the generous support of the Donemus Foundation, Amsterdam.

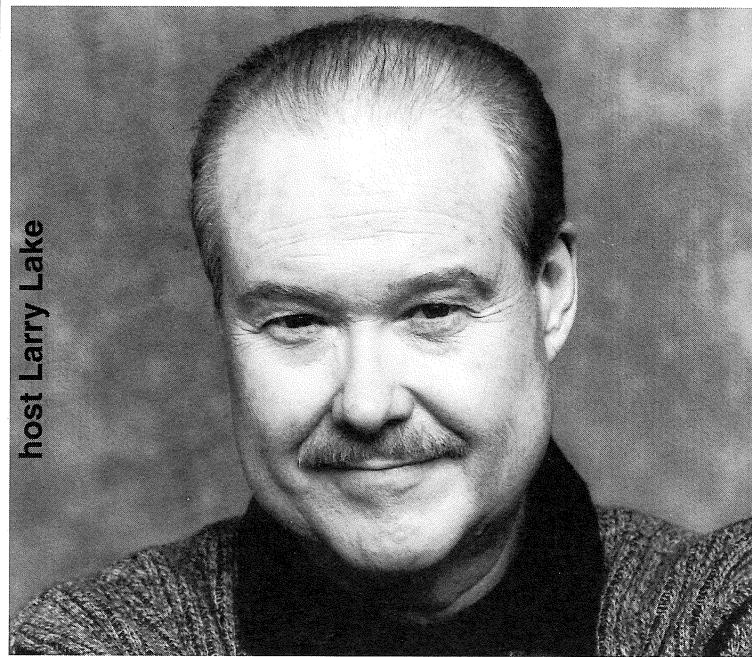
Tomoko Mukaiyama's piano courtesy of  YAMAHA

Tonight's concert is being recorded for broadcast by CBC Radio Two and will be aired at a future date on Two New Hours, Sundays at 10:05 p.m.

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music director & conductor

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programme notes

Colin McPhee

Symphony No. 2
for orchestra (1957)

McPhee's *Symphony No. 2* was commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra. Interestingly, the autograph score is dated "December 15, 1957," exactly one day after the date proclaimed by the Louisville Orchestra as the day for its first rehearsals.

In a letter to Aaron Copland, McPhee wrote, "This symphony is meant to be as much understatement as *Tabuh-tabuhan* was the reverse." The reference is to McPhee's 1936 signature piece which was strongly influenced by his life in Indonesia, particularly Bali, from 1931-38.

With *Symphony No. 2*, McPhee went out of his way to compose an "approachable" piece. It was written during a decade which saw a marked transition in McPhee's compositions, back into the world of western commercial acceptability.

Louis Andriessen

TAO

for piano, koto, voice and orchestra (1996)
dedicated to Tomoko Mukaiyama

"*TAO (Way)* is the second part of a larger work in three movements: *Trilogie van de Laatste Dag* (*Trilogy of the Last Day*).

"In this second part the choir sings a text from 'Tao Te Ching' written by Lao Tse circa 600 B.C. The piano soloist ends the piece with a poem by Takamura Kotaro (1883-1956), written about 2500 years later. There is a kind of contradiction between the two texts: in 'Tao Te Ching' calm and emptiness dominate, and in the chosen fragment, invulnerability. But Kotaro's poem is primarily ominous.

"The composition is based on a series of 13 chords – the 13 companions which Lao Tse speaks of. I did not even try to relate to what people call 'Music from the Far East,' or even worse, 'World Music.'"

- Louis Andriessen

Tao Te Ching

by Lao Tse

Chapter 50

(trans. John C.H. Wu)

When one is out of Life, one is in Death.

The companions of Life are thirteen;
the companions of Death are thirteen;
and, when a living person moves into
the Realm of Death, his companions are
also thirteen. How is this?

Because he draws upon the resources of
Life too heavily.

It is said that he who knows well how to live
meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on his road,
and comes out from the battle-ground untouched
by the weapons of war. For, in him, a buffalo
would find no butt for his horns, a tiger nothing
to lay his claws upon, and a weapon of war no place
to admit its point. How is this?

Because there is no room for Death in him.

Knife Whetter

by Takamura Kotaro

(trans. Andriessen/Mukaiyama)

Wordless, he is whetting a knife.

Sun already going, he's still whetting it.

Pressing the back blade and the front,
and changing the water, he's again whetting it.

What on earth he wants to make,
as if he did not know even that,
with split-second concentration on his brow,
he whets the knife under green leaves.

His sleeves gradually tear,
his moustache turns white.
Fury, necessity, or innocence,
or is he chasing an infinite sequence
simply, prodigiously?

Maki Ishii

Afro-Concerto, Op. 50

for solo percussion and orchestra (1982)

As indicated by its title, this concerto was composed under the powerful inspiration of African traditional music, in particular the magical musical world invoked by incessant repetition.

The acoustic structure at the core of this work employs many fragments taken from the traditional music of the Senufo and Pygmy tribes. These fragments are incessantly repeated, their tonal and melodic structures being varied by the soloist and the orchestra as the piece progresses.

The work exists in two versions, Version A being scored for two soloists (marimba and percussion), and Version B for a single soloist. The latter is the version performed this evening.



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biographies



Alex Pauk, conductor

As a conductor and composer, Alex Pauk has been a leading exponent of new music in Canada since his graduation from the University of Toronto in 1971. After graduation, he participated in the Ontario Arts Council Conductor's Workshop for two years before continuing his studies in Europe and Japan.

In the early 1970s, Pauk settled in Vancouver where he was named Vancouver's Musician of the Year in 1975. While there, he helped establish the new music group *Days Months and Years to Come*, for which he was the Music Director and Conductor until 1979. Before moving to Vancouver, he had been instrumental in establishing *ArrayMusic* in Toronto and was its first conductor.

Pauk returned to Toronto again in 1980, founding the Esprit Orchestra three years later. Along with his careful attention to programming, Pauk's work involves a strong role in the development of Esprit's *Toward a Living Art* education and outreach programme.

Pauk was co-chair for the 1984 ISCM World Music Days held in Toronto and Montréal. In 1986, he

was the Music Director and Conductor of the Satori Festival of New Music in Winnipeg, and recently he was Music Director for R. Murray Schafer's *Princess of the Stars*, performed at Wildcat Lake in the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve.

As a composer, Pauk has written over thirty-five works and received commissions from the CBC, New Music Concerts, Vancouver New Music Society, Quebec Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, leading Indian dancer and choreographer Menaka Thakkar, harpist Erica Goodman, the Hannaford Street Silver Band and many others.

He has also composed for film, television, radio and music theatre. Pauk's most recent film scores, co-written with Alexina Louie, include the soundtracks for director Don McKellar's film *Last Night* and Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*.

Recognizing in part nearly two decades of tireless efforts on behalf of new music, the Toronto Musicians' Association named Alex Pauk Toronto's Musician of the Year for 1999.



Tomoko Mukaiyama *piano, koto, voice*

Tomoko Mukaiyama concentrates on discovering and performing new works by contemporary composers. She studied in Tokyo, Indiana and Amsterdam. In 1991 she won first prize at the International Gaudeamus Competition.

Compositions have been written for and dedicated to her by Louis Andriessen, Willem Jeths, Maarten Altena, Willem Breuker, David Dramm, Atsuhiro Gondai, Vanessa Lann, Merzbow, Alexander Raskatov, Frederic Rzewski and Karen Tanaka.

Mukaiyama collaborates with artists in many other disciplines, such as theatre director Jan Ritsema, music-cinéaste Frank Scheffer, architect duo digital PBX and fashion designer Niels Klavers. She has presented many solo recitals in Europe, the United States and Asia.

Often a part of world premieres, she has participated in festivals including Darmstadt, Huddersfield,

Donaueschingen, the New Music Festival in Lithuania and June in Buffalo.



Beverley Johnston *percussion*

Beverley Johnston is internationally recognized for her virtuosic and dynamic performances on a wide range of percussion instruments. Her performances and recordings have been broadcast on radio networks all over the world. Presently at work on her fourth solo recording, Johnston has released three solo CDs: "Impact" and "Alternate Currents" on the Centrediscs label, and "Marimbach" on the CBC Records Musica Viva label.

Since her appearance as a solo performer at Japan's Expo '90, Johnston has toured many times across Canada, performing with a wide range of groups, from the Vancouver New Music Society to the Scotia Festival of Music. Her repertoire includes the works of such Canadian composers as Patrick Cardy, Michael Colgrass, Omar Daniel, Christos Hatzis and Gary

Kulesha. She has also toured throughout the Northeastern United States.

In addition to touring England, Norway and Sweden, Johnston was invited to perform at the 1998 Stockholm International Percussion Event. In 1999, she was the Canadian representative at the renowned Journées de la Percussion in Paris, France.

Johnston received her training at Vanier College in her native Montreal and at the University of Toronto, where she studied with Russell Hartenberger, a member of the percussion ensemble NEXUS.

Colin McPhee

Born in Montreal in 1900, Colin McPhee was raised in Toronto, where he premiered his *First Piano Concerto* with Toronto's New Symphony Orchestra.

McPhee eventually grew to despise Toronto because of its provincialism and Victorian sensibilities at the time. He escaped to Paris, but after deciding not to study with Nadia Boulanger, as so many composers of his generation had, he went to New York and the studio of the more avant-garde composer Edgard Varèse.

It was in New York that McPhee met his future wife, Jane Belo. Fate led them to Bali, about as far away from western culture as one could go in 1931. Over the next seven years, McPhee immersed himself in an intensive study of Balinese gamelan music – watching while craftsmen forged the instruments

that make up a gamelan ensemble, criss-crossing the island in search of both instrumentation and tunes, notating the complexities of every gamelan piece he heard played, and commissioning the formation or reconstitution of gamelan ensembles. The melodies and rhythms of Balinese music are fully evident in his 1936 composition, *Tabuh-tabuhan*.

McPhee is credited with literally saving the Balinese gamelan tradition. He authored "Music in Bali," which is still the standard textbook at the prestigious Conservatory of Music and Dance in Den Pasar, Bali.

His departure from Bali coincided with the end of his marriage to Jane Belo. For a short while in the 1940s, McPhee lived in a cooperative brownstone in Brooklyn, New York, where his roommates included W.H. Auden, Benjamin Britten, Truman Capote and Leonard Bernstein.

The late 1950s saw the premieres of McPhee's *Transitions*, *Symphony No. 2* and *Nocturne*. He composed his last work, *Concerto for Wind Orchestra*, in 1960, four years before his death in California.

Louis Andriessen

Louis Andriessen was born in Utrecht, The Netherlands in 1939. After early training in composition with his father, the composer Hendrik Andriessen, he continued his studies with Kees van Baaren at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague. Upon graduating with the major composition prize, Andriessen subsequently studied two years with

Luciano Berio (Milan and Berlin).

Returning to Holland, he quickly established himself as a leading musical figure through his compositions and as a performer of his own and others' work. Since 1978 he has also held a teaching appointment in composition at the Royal Conservatory. Together with music critic and musicologist Elmer Schonberger, Andriessen co-authored a book on Igor Stravinsky: "Het Apollinisch Uurwerk" (The Apollonian Clockwork), published in 1983.

The best known compositions from Andriessen's earlier period are: *Series for 2 pianos* (1958-64), *Nocturnes* for soprano and chamber orchestra (1959), *Ittrospezzione II* for orchestra (1963), *Registers* for piano (1963), *Souvenirs d'enfance* for piano (1966, in cooperation with writer J. Bernlef), *Anachronie I* for orchestra (1967), *Anachronie II* for oboe and chamber orchestra (1969), *Contra tempus* for 22 musicians (1967-68), and *Spektakel* for jazz musicians (1970). He was co-author of the opera *Reconstructie* (1969).

During the 1970s he wrote a number of political works which include *Volkslied* (1971) and *Workers' Union* (1975). With the 1972 composition of *De Volharding*, he founded a wind ensemble by that name for which he wrote a second piece, *On Jimmy Yancey* (1972). In 1977, *Hoketus* similarly resulted in a like-named permanent ensemble in which Andriessen was pianist.

For his major work *De Staat* (1973-76), he was awarded the prestigious Matthijs Vermeulen Prize in 1977 as well

as the first prize of the Rostrum of Composers.

Andriessen has also composed electronic works and music for film; among his works for the theatre are *Mattheus Passie* (1976), *Orpheus* (1977), *George Sand* (1980) and *Doctor Nero* (1984).

His large-scale work *De Stijl* (1985) was written for a combination of the Volharding and Hoketus ensembles and premiered in the 1985 Holland Festival. *De Stijl* is also Part Three of a four-movement opera called *De Materie*, produced by The Netherlands Opera as a main event in the 1989 Holland Festival.

Maki Ishii

Maki Ishii was born in 1936 in Tokyo. After studying composition and conducting from 1952 until 1958 in Tokyo, he moved to Berlin where he continued his studies under Boris Blacher and Josef Rufer.

In 1962 he returned to Japan, although he has maintained close ties to Germany. In 1969 he was invited to Berlin by the German Academic Exchange Service to take part in the esteemed Berliner Künstlerprogramm. Since that time Ishii has been active in Germany as well as in Japan as both a composer and conductor.

His compositions have been performed all over the world, with honorary festivals in his name at the Paris Festival d'Automne in 1978, the Berlin Festwochen in 1981, in Geneva at the Eté Japonnais 1983 and Berlin's Insel Music Festival, to name but a few.

Esprit Orchestra

Canada's only orchestra devoted exclusively to new orchestral music, Esprit Orchestra was founded in 1983 by music director and conductor Alex Pauk.

Comprised of a core of forty-five dedicated musicians with the special skills needed to perform contemporary orchestral music, Esprit presents its annual subscription series of concerts in Toronto. The orchestra is devoted to developing a Canadian musical literature. To this end, it commissions and premieres new works each season, and ensures continued public access to these works through encore performances, radio broadcasts, compact disc and film recordings, and national and international tours. Esprit's concerts are regularly recorded and broadcast on CBC Radio One and Radio Two.

Now in its 18th season, Esprit has commissioned more than 60 new works from over 50 different composers, including such internationally-acclaimed Canadians as José Evangelista, John Rea, R. Murray Schafer and Harry Somers. Moreover, works commissioned by NEXUS, CBC Radio, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (among others) have been premiered by Esprit.

Another facet of Esprit's mission is a commitment to setting new Canadian music within an international context. The orchestra has introduced Canadian audiences to major works by such contemporary masters as Takemitsu, Ligeti, Berio, Adams, Schnittke and Penderecki.

Maestro Pauk and the orchestra have also collaborated with leading soloists and ensembles including Jean Stilwell, Maureen Forrester, Rivka Golani, Desmond Hoebig, Richard Margison, Jon Kimura Parker, André Laplante, Robert Aitken and NEXUS.

In September of 1999, Esprit completed its triumphant debut European tour. With four concerts in Amsterdam at the invitation of the International Gaudeamus Music Week and another in Paris, the tour represented one of the largest-ever presentations of Canadian orchestral music in Europe. Over 90% of the repertoire was Canadian and compatriots Robert Aitken and Erica Goodman were the orchestra's chosen soloists. The previous year, Esprit also toured Western Canada, presenting concerts and educational activities to rave reviews.

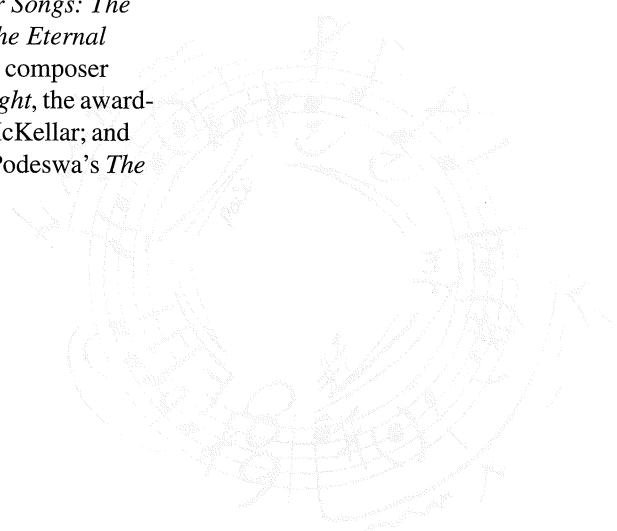
The Esprit Orchestra's excellence and commitment to the future of our culture have not gone unnoticed: In 1990, SOCAN's Award of Merit, recognizing imaginative programming of contemporary music over several seasons, was presented to the orchestra; in 1995, Esprit was awarded the Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award for outstanding contribution to musical creativity; the orchestra was awarded its first Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Arts for success in developing private sector and community support in 1996, its second in 1998 and a third in 2000. In 1998, Esprit was one of 23 recipients of a special

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“million-dollar birthday gift” celebrating Joan Chalmers’ 70th birthday. The orchestra expanded its activities in 1988 to include an education and audience development programme, *Toward a Living Art*, that has involved hundreds of students in workshops, rehearsals and concerts with Maestro Pauk, orchestra musicians, leading soloists and composers, and other professionals from the music industry.

November 1996 saw Esprit’s *Toward a Living Art Festival*—a week-long open-house where students and the general public could meet composers from across Canada—feature open rehearsals, workshops, artists’ talks, film screenings and concerts. The next year, Esprit initiated its *Student Audience Programme*, and provided 500 high school students with free tickets to its concerts.

The orchestra has also appeared in several Rhombus Media films, among them *Ravel; September Songs: The Music of Kurt Weill; The Eternal Earth*, about Canadian composer Alexina Louie; *Last Night*, the award-winning film by Don McKellar; and most recently Jeremy Podeswa’s *The Five Senses*.



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